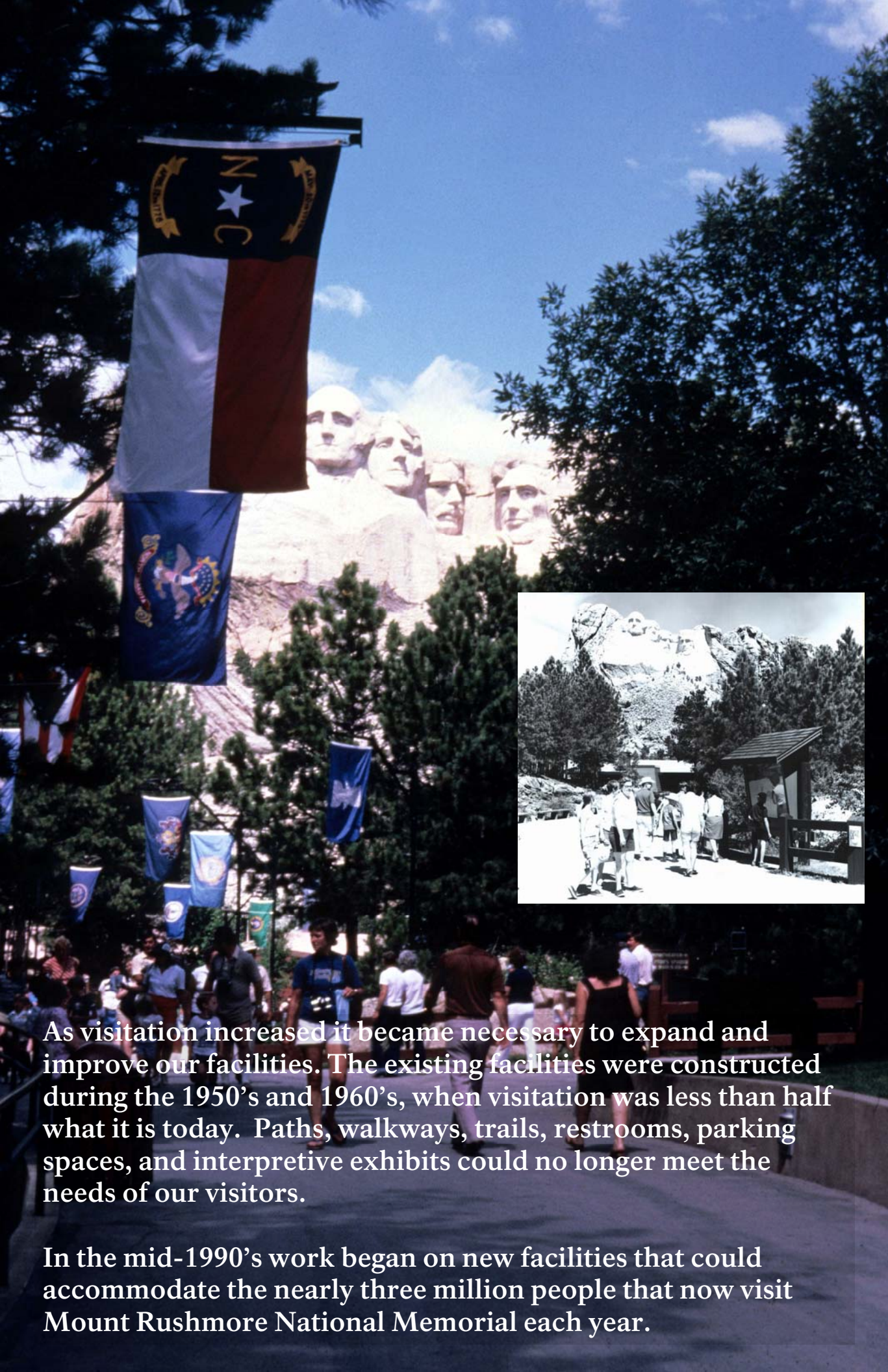


Keeping Up With The Times



Many visitors who have been here before are surprised when they arrive today. From the original roadside pullout to the current modern buildings, the facilities at Mount Rushmore National Memorial have changed over time. These changes have been made to better meet the needs of our visitors.

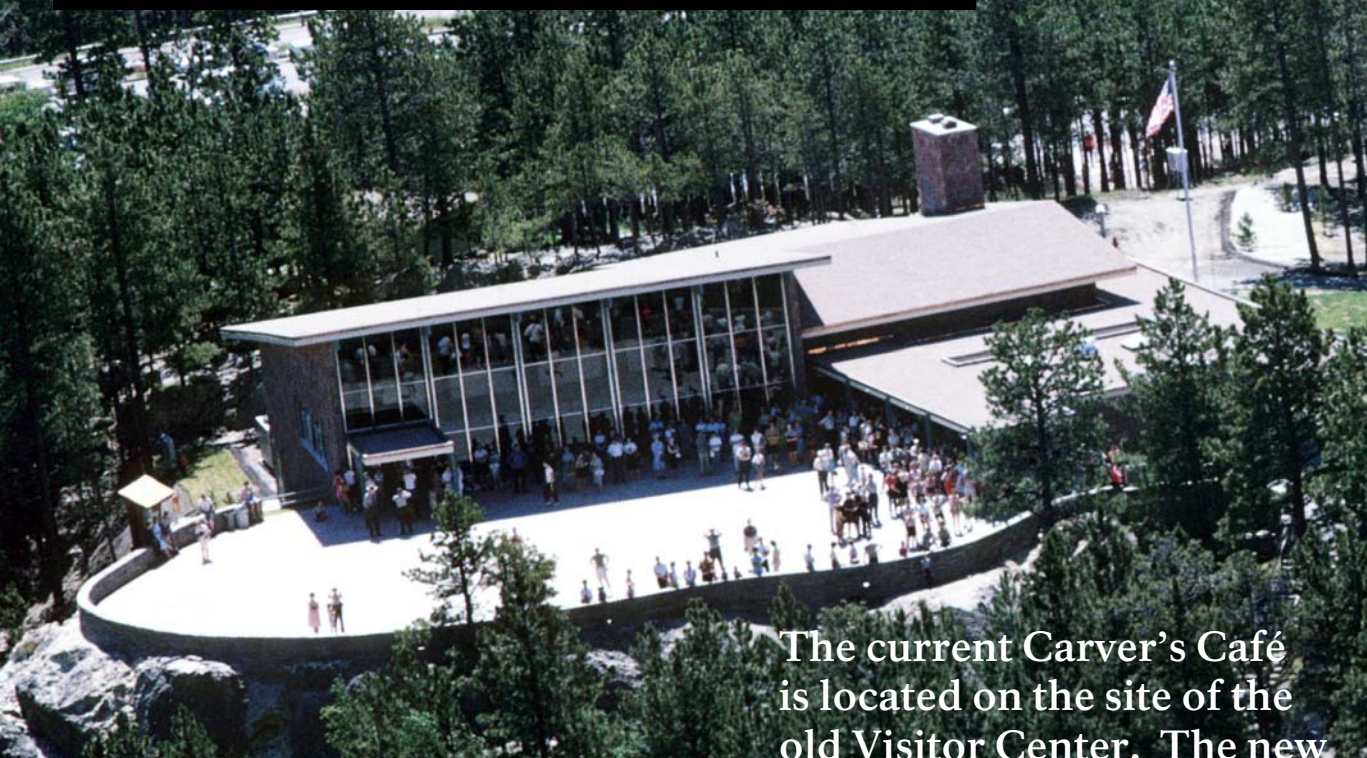
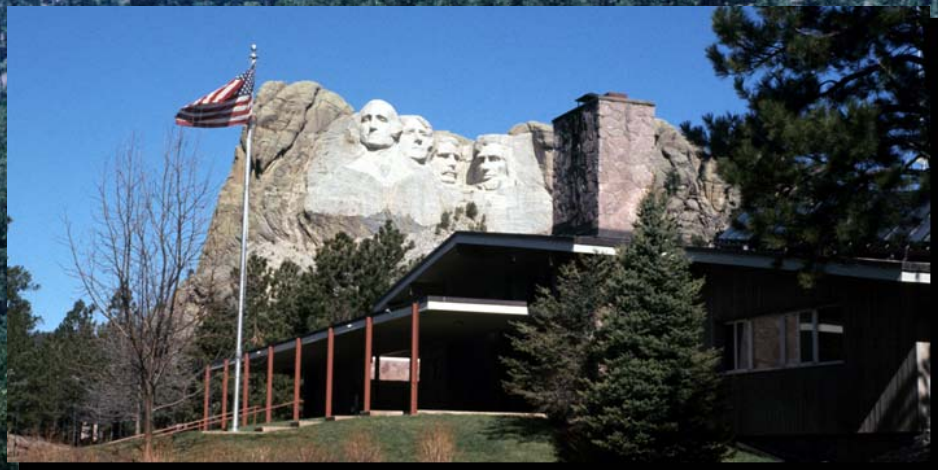
Pictured is the path from the parking lot to the Visitor Center as it looked after the state flags were added for the Bicentennial Celebration in 1976.



As visitation increased it became necessary to expand and improve our facilities. The existing facilities were constructed during the 1950's and 1960's, when visitation was less than half what it is today. Paths, walkways, trails, restrooms, parking spaces, and interpretive exhibits could no longer meet the needs of our visitors.

In the mid-1990's work began on new facilities that could accommodate the nearly three million people that now visit Mount Rushmore National Memorial each year.

During the major reconstruction which began in 1994, the Visitor Center (pictured below, top and middle) and the Buffalo Dining Room and Gift Shop (bottom) were replaced. The current Lincoln Borglum Museum and Visitor Center sit on the site of the old dining room and gift shop.



The current Carver's Café is located on the site of the old Visitor Center. The new buildings provided much needed space and updated facilities for the growing number of visitors at Mount Rushmore National Memorial.



Buffalo Dining Room



Over the years vehicle parking at the memorial became a concern as well. Pictured above is the previous parking facility, which held around 500 vehicles. During the summer of 1989 alone, visitation was high enough to exceed available parking on 36 days.

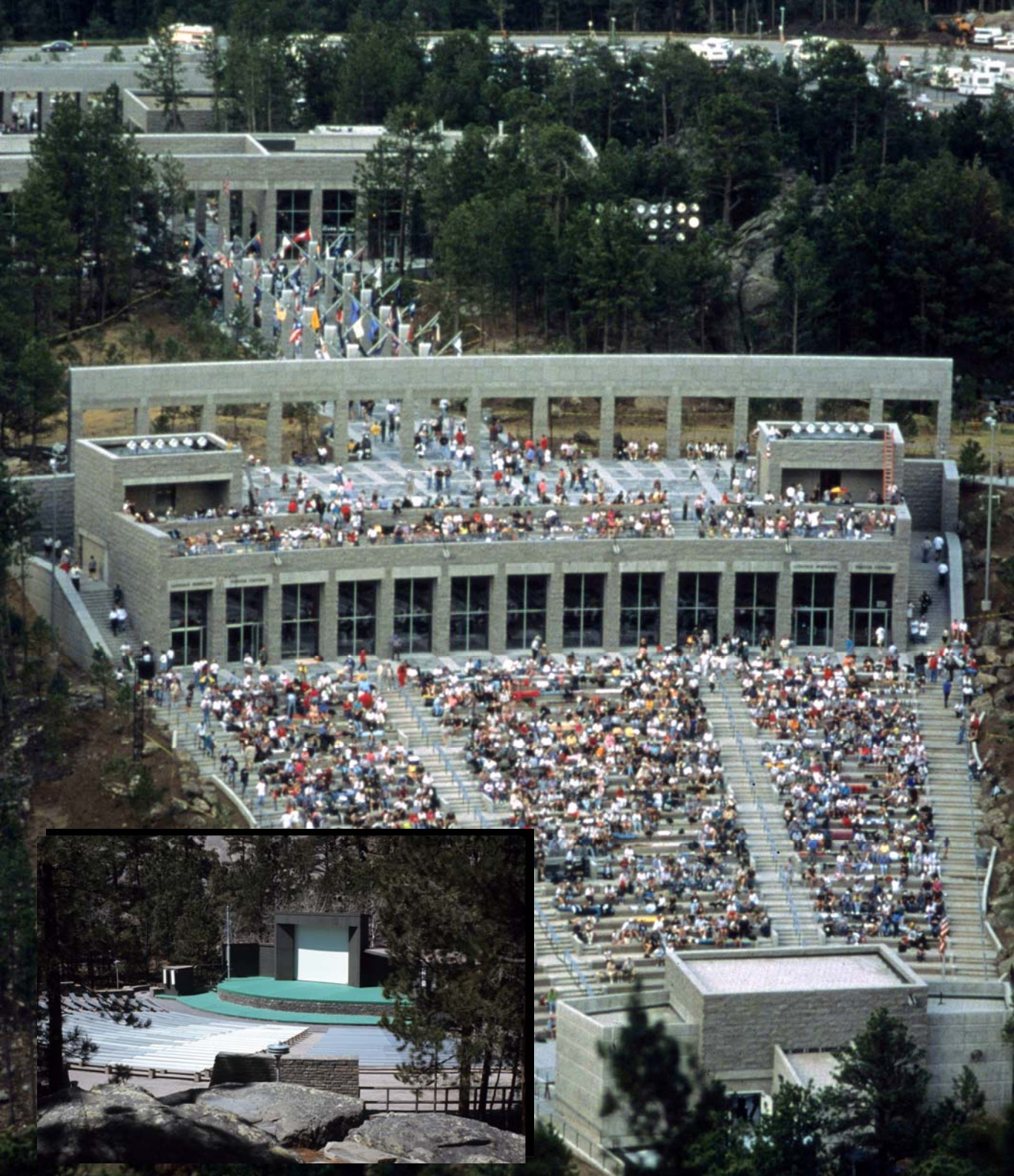
Visitor Center

Traffic congestion was common with lines of cars stretching down the hill towards Keystone (below), with visitors eagerly waiting to get in. It became necessary to provide additional parking as visitation increased.

Amphitheater

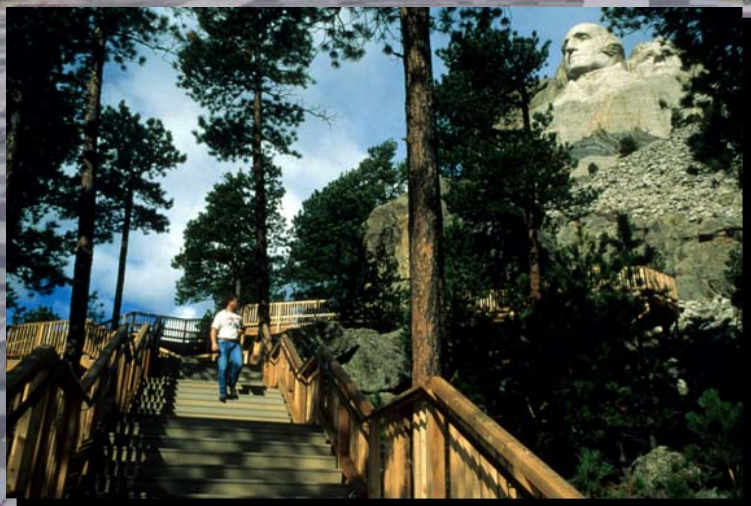
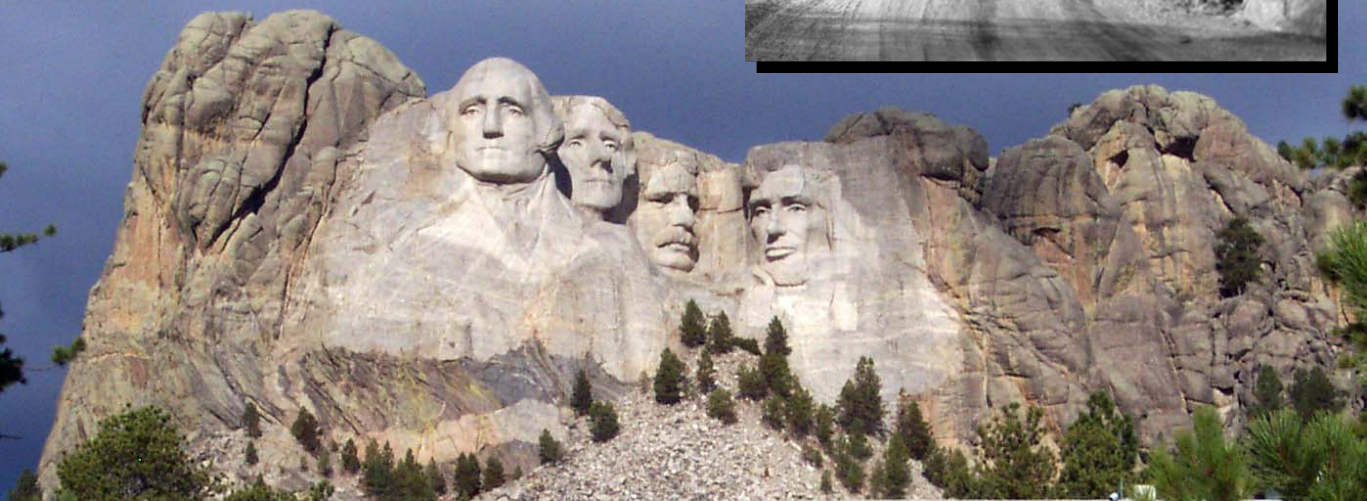


Throughout the summer months a lighting ceremony is held in the park's amphitheater each evening. The original amphitheater (pictured bottom left), was simply too small for the continually growing audience. Currently, an average of 2,500 visitors attend this summer program nightly.



Original amphitheater, constructed in 1959, with a seating capacity of 850.

As Mount Rushmore National Memorial and its visitors move into the future the facilities here will continue to change, as the needs of our visitors change. What will not change, however, is the sculpture that these facilities sit beneath.



The mission of the National Park Service is to constantly balance the protection of our resources while providing a way for visitors to find their own meaning in these special places.

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